

Introducing Solid Foods

At about 6 months, your baby may be ready to add solid family foods to their diet. Keep breastfeeding or chestfeeding, too, until they're 2 years old – or even longer, if you both wish.

Your baby may be ready for solid foods if they can:

- ✓ sit and hold their head up
- ✓ watch a spoon, open their mouth and close their lips around it
- ✓ keep most of their food in their mouth

First Foods

Your baby's first foods should be rich in iron – like meat, fish, chicken, eggs, lentils, tofu and iron-fortified baby cereal. Introduce these alongside other family foods, like grains, vegetables and fruit.



HOW TO Introduce solid food

- Pick a time when your baby is wide awake and has an appetite but isn't too hungry. Solids can be offered before or after breastfeeding or chestfeeding.
- Sit them up in a feeding chair, facing you.
- Eat with your baby so they can learn by watching you.
- Serve them the same foods as the rest of the family, without added sugar or salt.



BE AWARE

It's not safe for your baby to have honey in their first year, even if it's pasteurized. It can cause botulism, a serious illness.

Meat

Meat, fish and seafood will be easier for your baby to eat if it's moist and in tiny pieces. Try:

- mixing small bits with water, human milk, mashed vegetables or gravy to make an even texture
- shredding it or serving it ground up
- using nutrient-rich dark meat rather than white meat chicken

Be sure to take out any bones and shells from fish. Fully cook all pork to an inside temperature of 71°C; ground beef, lamb and veal to 71°C; and game meats to 74°C. Well-done pieces and whole cuts of beef, lamb and veal should be cooked to 77°C. Eggs should be cooked until the yolks are hard (74°C). For poultry and game birds, cook to 74°C for parts and ground meat, and 82°C for whole birds. Fish should be cooked to 70°C (fully cooked fish should flake with a fork). Oysters should be cooked to 90°C, but other shellfish can be cooked to 71°C. Use a food thermometer to check the inside temperature.

Homemade Baby Food

Your baby can eat the same foods your family normally eats. Puréeing isn't necessary, even before they have teeth. Soft foods may be mashed, ground, minced or puréed. Or try finger foods like small pieces of well-cooked boiled or scrambled egg, tofu, fish, well-cooked vegetables, soft fruits without skins, cooked pasta or grated cheese.



DID YOU KNOW?

Gagging is a normal reflex babies have to prevent choking. If your baby gags, stay calm and reassure them. If you panic, you may make them afraid to try new foods.



HOW TO Keep homemade baby food safe

- Before and after food preparation, wash counters and utensils with soap and water. Disinfect surfaces and equipment by using 1 teaspoon (5 ml) bleach mixed with 3 cups (750 ml) water. This is especially important after handling and preparing raw meat and fish.
- Throw out worn cutting boards, which can hide germs.
- Put leftovers in the fridge and use within 2 days. Or freeze them and use within 2 months.



HOW TO Use the microwave to safely reheat baby food

- Stir at least once halfway through to ensure even heating.
- Taste the food to ensure it's not too hot before giving it to your child.
- Don't use the microwave to heat bottles. Warm them in hot water instead.
- Only use plastic containers or plastic wrap labelled "microwave safe."
- Don't use damaged, stained or smelly containers.
- Microwaving should only be used for reheating cooked food, not cooking raw food.